Raj Kapoor

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REAL LIVES

Acknowledgements

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REAL LIVES

Raj Kapoor

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The Basic Skills Agency

In 1988
All India Radio
told of the death of Raj Kapoor.
People of all ages all over India
stood in the streets and wept.
He had been top man in the Indian film industry
for more than forty years.

Raj's life began in Peshawar
on December 14th 1924.
He was born into an acting family.
He was the son of the great actor Prithviraj Kapoor.
His brothers Shammi and Shashi
also went into films.
But Raj was the greatest Kapoor of them all.

THE LEARNING CENTRE
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At school Raj won prizes for acting
and he started his film career at the age of seven.
He was given a present for his part
in one of the early talking films *"The Toy Cart."*

When he left school
he wanted to work in films.
He started in the lowly job of clapper boy.
He did odd jobs, sweeping floors
doing as he was told.
But he learned about making films.

From clapper boy he moved to acting.
But he was soon to direct his own film.
By the age of twenty three
he became the youngest producer
and director in the industry.
His first film *Aag* (Fire)
is about a film producer
who has his face burnt in a fire.

R. K. FILMS PRESENT

आग

aag

Produced and Directed by

RAJ KAPOOR

NARGIS, KAMINI KAUSHAL, NIGAR & RAJKAPOOR

The female star in *Aag* (Fire) was Nargis.
Their first meeting
lived in his memory forever.
He went to her house
to see her mother.

Nargis came to the door.
She was making bhajias
and she had batter on her face.
When Raj saw her
he wanted her to be in his film.
She was just sixteen.
Years later he put this moment
into his film *Bobby*.

Raj and Nargis
acted together in films
for more than ten years.
Together on film they were electric.
All the magazines asked
if they were in love
in real life.

◀ *Aag was Raj Kapoor's first film.*

Their next film in 1949 was *Barsaat* (Monsoon).
It was the most successful film of its day.
People came in their thousands
to see them together.

Raj Kapoor Studios was built in 1950.
The famous embrace from *Barsaat*
became the emblem for the famous new studio.

The film *Awaara* (The Tramp) made RK Studios
and the Hindi film industry
famous all over the world.
Raj and Nargis went to Russia in 1956.
They were greeted as heroes.
The Russians called him Comrade Awaara.

Raj Kapoor invented a new kind of hero
in his films.
The name of that hero was Raju.
Raju is a little man
with a heart of gold.

He hides his pain
behind a smiling face.
Indian people took the little man
into their hearts.

◀ *The 'RK' banner for Raj Kapoor's Studios which was built in 1950.*

Raj used the same little man in many of his films.
In *Shree 420* (Mr 420) Raj sings a song:

My shoes are Japanese
These trousers are English
My red cap is Russian
But my heart is still Indian.

This is a film about a honest country boy
who comes to the city
and learns about dishonesty.
Raj's films are always
on the side of the underdog.

Jagte Raho (Stay awake) is a film about
a poor, thirsty man –
all he wanted was water.
For this he gets into trouble
and finds out how rich people live.
It is said to be one of ten best Indian films ever.
But it was not a success at the time.

◀ *Probably the most famous photograph of Raj Kapoor in Shree 420.*

The dancing scene in Shree 420.

In 1957 Raj's partnership with Nargis ended.
He was hurt.
He felt sorry for himself.
But he went on making films.

In the 1960s Raj made a more modern film.
It was called *Sangam* (Confluence).
It was about three friends
two male and one female
and the problems they have.
The film was set in the western world
and it was a big success.
Raj took a risky step with Sangam.
He filmed actresses with wet clothes.
It was a bold step and it paid off.
He used this idea again in other films.

Raj Kapoor in Mera Naam Joker. ▶

Next came *Mera Naam Joker* (My name is Joker)
in the 1970's.
This film was very important for Raj.
He put all his money into it.

It is about the life of a circus clown
but it is really about Raj's own life.
It took six years to make
and is three hours long.
The film was a failure.
His career as an actor was over.
Raj was in debt.
He still liked the film very much.
He said he would like to be remembered
for this film and its songs.

Raj went on to make other popular films
some starring his sons Rishi and Randhir.
The sons and grandsons of Prithviraj
have starred in over 300 films.

Raj was a great showman.
He enjoyed life in a big way.
Bollywood stars attended his big parties.
He loved talking about himself to magazines
and newspapers.
Some people said
he thought too much of himself.

On May 2nd 1988 he was in Delhi to get
the Dada Saheb Phalke Award
at the National Film Awards Ceremony.
He became ill
and could not get up.
He was rushed to the hospital.
A month later he died.

Raj did not live to finish his last film *Henna*.
But three years after his death his sons finished it.
They said
"We are very proud that Raj Kapoor is
and always will be a big name."

REAL LIVES

Real Lives 'Bollywood' is a series of readers about five famous Asian film stars. They are:

- Raj Kapoor
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Each book:

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